

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 044750

FOLL SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO ANKARA BEIRUT ISLAMABAD KABUL
PARIS TEHRAN FROM JIDDA 07 MAR 73 REPEATED TO YOU QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 0959

BEIRUT, ANKARA FOR BNDD

PARIS FOR CUSTOMS

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SNAR, IR, SA, AF, PK

SUBJECT: ILLICIT NARCOTICS TRAFFIC

REF : JIDDA 0884 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: BNDD REP MILLER AND CUSTOMS REP KNIERIM COMPLETED
WEEK- LONG TOUR OF SAUDI ARABIA. HAVE CONCLUDED THERE NO
GROWTH OR MANUFACTURING PROBLEM, MINIMAL LOCAL ABUSE
(AND THAT PRIMARILY AMONG FOREIGNERS), AND NO EVIDENCE
OF ANY SIGNIFICANT TRANSIT ACTIVITIES; IT CLEAR TO THEM
HOWEVER THAT SAUDI ARABIAN GOVERNMENT (SAG) NARCOTICS
CONTROL FACILITIES MINIMAL. MILLER AND KNIERIM WERE IM-
PRESSED WITH AID/ OPS ADVISORY EFFORTS AND ENCOURAGED ABOUT SAG
PLANS FOR FUTURE. END SUMMARY.

1. TWO- MAN TEAM FOUND NO EVIDENCE THAT ANY NARCOTICS,
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INCLUDING PILLS, AMPHETAMINES, HASHISH, OPIATES, ETC., ARE EITHER LOCALLY GROWN OR MANUFACTURED. ALL NARCOTICS IN SAUDI ARABIA THEY CONCLUDE COME FROM ABROAD, WITH POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF MINIMAL AND UNIMPORTANT AMOUNTS OF QAT, A VERY MILD NARCOTIC WHICH MAY BE GROWN FOR LOCAL CONSUMPTION IN MOUNTAINOUS ASIR REGIONS NEAR YEMENI BORDER.

2. IT EVIDENT TOO THAT, BECAUSE OF RELIGIOUS STRICTURES AND STRENGTH OF FAMILY STRUCTURE, AS WELL AS STRICT LEGAL PROHIBITION, USE OF NARCOTICS BY NON- WESTERNIZED ARAB POPULATION, IS VIRTUALLY NIL. LONG DISTANCE TRUCK DRIVERS MAY OCCASIONALLY USE PEP PILLS, BUT TO EXTENT THERE EXISTS ANY LOCAL ABUSE PROBLEM, IT CONFINED ALMOST EXCLUSIVELY TO AMERICANS AND FOREIGNERS, EXPECIALLY STUDENTS STUDYING ABROAD, AND FEW YOUNGER WESTERNIZED SAUDIS WHO MAY HAVE DEVELOPED TASTE IN U . S., EUROPE OR LEBANON. TEAM NOTED OF ONLY FORTY ARRESTS ON NARCOTICS CHARGES DURING 1972, NINE HAD BEEN FOREIGNERS.

3. ALTHOUGH AID/ OPS CHIEF NESBITT FELT, AS RESULT HIS RECENT TRIP TO AFGHANISTAN, PAKISTAN AND IRAN, THERE WAS SIGNIFICANT TRANSIT OF HASHISH AND OPIUM FROM THOSE AREAS THROUGH PERSIAN GULF TO TRUCIAL STATES AND THENCE OVERLAND THROUGH EASTERN SAUDI ARABIA, TEAM FOUND NO DIRECT EVIDENCE ON THEIR SAUDI TOUR TO SUPPORT THIS BELIEF. TEAM NOTED CUSTOMS OFFICERS AND FRONTIER FORCE PATROLS ARE NOT EFFECTIVE ENOUGH TO PREVENT SUCH MOVEMENT WHERE IT TAKING PLACE, BUT ON OTHER HAND, THEY COULD SEE NO RATIONALE FOR MOVEMENT IN THIS DIRECTION; NOR DID THEY BELIEVE, WERE NARCOTICS INDEED MOVING FROM SOUTH ASIA TO LEBANON AND MEDITERRANEAN WOULD IT GO OVERLAND THROUGH SAUDI ARABIA RATHER THAN DIRECTLY UP PERSIAN GULF TO KUWAIT OR IRAQ. (TEAM NOTED THAT OTHER BNDD AND CUSTOMS AGENTS CURRENTLY UNDERTAKING SEPARATE PERSIAN GULF SURVEY WHICH WILL NO DOUBT GIVE MORE COMPLETE DETAILS ON SMUGGLING IN THAT AREA.) ADDITIONALLY, TEAM REPORTED THERE HAVE INDEED BEEN VARIOUS HASHISH AND OPIUM SEIZURES BUT TOTAL FOR 1972 WAS NO MORE THAN 60 GRAMS OPIUM AND 50 KILOS OF HASHISH. TEAM BELIEVES THAT IF LARGE- SCALE SMUGGLING WERE OCCURRING IN EASTERN REGION, AT LEAST ONE SIZEABLE SHIPMENT WOULD HAVE COME TO LIGHT.

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4. ONLY TIME WHEN SAUDI ARABIA WOULD APPEAR TO BE USED

AS TRANSIT POINT FOR NARCOTICS IS DURING HAJJ SEASON, WHEN INFLUX OF MORE THAN HALF MILLION FOREIGNERS PROVIDES OPPORTUNITY FOR SMALL- SCALE IMPORTATION AND LOCAL SALES. LOCAL PUBLIC SECURITY OFFICE IN JIDDA REPORTS THAT MANY HAJJIS BRING IN SUFFICIENT QUANTITIES OF NARCOTICS TO PAY FOR TRIP. EVEN MOST OF THIS IS SOLD TO OTHER HAJJIS FOR SUBSEQUENT EXPORTATION FROM SAUDI ARABIA.

5. IN REVIEWING ENFORCEMENT OF NARCOTICS CONTROLS, TEAM NOTED PUBLIC SECURITY OFFICE HAD RECENTLY TAKEN CHARGE THIS EFFORT. ADDITIONALLY, SEPARATE OFFICE UNDER PRINCE NA' IF, DEPUTY MINISTER OF INTERIOR, HAS BEEN SET UP TO DEAL EXCLUSIVELY WITH PROBLEM. A MAJOR JUMMA AS BEEN PLACED IN CHARGE; MILLER AND KNIERIM FOUND HIM EXCELLENT CHOICE. (PRINCE NA' IF HAS REQUESTED AID/ OPS ADVISORY HELP FOR MAJ. JUMNA. AID/ OPS, FOLLOWING FORMAL AID AND SAG CONCURRENCE, INTENDS ASSIGN FULL- TIME ADVISOR TO THIS EFFORT.) TO DATE, AID/ OPS RIYADH HAS TRAINED TWO CLASSES OF ABOUT 40 PUBLIC SECURITY OFFICERS, WHO NOW POSSESS VIRTUALLY ONLY IN- COUNTRY EXPERTISE IN NARC FIELD.

6. MILLER AND KNIERIM NOTED THEY WERE ENCOURAGED, IN SPITE OF CURRENT LACK OF NEED FOR STRONG ANTI- NARCOTICS ACTIVITIES, BY SAG AWARENESS THAT IN NEXT FEW YEARS IT MAY GROW INTO REAL PROBLEM. ACCORDINGLY, THEY APPLAUD EFFORTS NOW UNDERWAY BY SAG, AND EXCELLENT SUPPORT IT BEING PROVIDED BY AID/ OPS TEAM, HEADED BY CHARLES NESBITT. THEY IN PARTICULAR CONGRATULATE NESBITT ON PLACING NARCOTICS ADVISOR AT RIGHT HAND OF MINISTRY OF INTERIOR AUTHORITIES, WHILE ANY LOCAL DRUG PROBLEM STILL IN ITS INFANCY. IT THEIR BELIEF SAG NOW DEVELOPING NUCLEUS OF ANTI- NARCOTICS EFFORT WHICH WILL ENABLE IT TO CONTROL SITUATION IN FORESEEABLE FUTURE SHOULD ABUSE OR SMUGGLING INCREASE.

7. THEY WILL NEXT COORDINATE JOINT REPORT WITH TEAM COVERING SOUTH IRAN AND GULF PRINCIPALITIES. THEY PLAN RETURN FOR FURTHER LOOK AS NEEDED, PERHAPS AFTER YEAR OR 18 MONTHS.
THACHER UNQUOTE ROGERS

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